



## Wisconsin state veterinarian bans spring fair pig weigh-ins, recommends only terminal shows amidst disease concerns

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MADISON – In an effort to protect Wisconsin’s pork industry from the spread of a deadly, communicable virus among pigs, Dr. Paul McGraw, state veterinarian at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is issuing a ban on the usual spring weigh-ins of pigs in preparation for Wisconsin’s many county fairs. Dr. McGraw also recommends only terminal swine shows be held given the concerns regarding the spread of Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus (PEDv). To date, Wisconsin has seen six confirmed cases of PEDv, but nationally last week’s confirmed cases jumped to the highest weekly increase since the costly and highly contagious disease was discovered in the United States in April 2013.

“We don’t want infected pigs coming to a weigh-in, comingling with other pigs which then head back to the farm of origin exposing other pigs,” McGraw said. The disease is not transmissible to humans, but can result in tremendous production losses for swine producers.

The PED virus causes diarrhea, vomiting and severe dehydration in hogs. Industry analysts estimate one to four million swine have died from PED since being found in the U.S pig population in 2013.

A ban on spring weigh-ins is the first step in minimizing the effect of PEDv on Wisconsin pork producers. In addition, McGraw recommends cancelling all shows that would return pigs to their farm of origin, otherwise known as non-terminal shows. Fairs that decide to hold non-terminal shows despite the warning may be subject to possible state action if PEDv is found at the show.

“If PEDv is found or suspected at a non-terminal event, all pigs may be quarantined to the facility until we receive a confirmatory test for PEDv. If PEDv is found, all pigs would likely be sent direct to slaughter,” McGraw said. If disease is not found at the event, the pigs could return to their farm of origin as planned.

“As we head into the busy fair and exhibition season here in Wisconsin we are looking at some of our fair and show processes and asking if it’s really worth the potential risk they pose to the pork industry,” McGraw says. “The only safe way to control the disease is to ensure that the pigs comingled at fairs and shows are sent directly to slaughter.”

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Transmission can be minimized by swine farmers using proper biosecurity methods, including washing trucks and trailers between loads, washing boots and clothing, and establishing a line of separation between clean and dirty areas. The National Pork Board has developed a wide variety of biosecurity information that is free and available at [www.pork.org](http://www.pork.org).

“The Pork Board has done a great job of outlining the many precautions swine farmers should be taking to minimize their losses by keeping the virus off their farm,” McGraw says. “When swine are comingled at shows and exhibitions, the potential for viral spread increases, so we want to do all we can to keep the virus out to begin with.”

For more information about animal diseases, visit [datcp.wi.gov](http://datcp.wi.gov). You can also connect with us on Twitter at [twitter.com/widatcp](https://twitter.com/widatcp) or Facebook at [facebook.com/widatcp](https://facebook.com/widatcp).

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